

Remarks

The application has been amended to more clearly define the present invention. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-21 stand rejected as being unpatentable over US Patent No. 4,022,844 to Cazenove et al. (hereafter "Cazenove") in view of Coon et al. (Journal of Organic Chemistry (1973), 38 (25), 4243-4248 hereafter "Coon". This grounds for rejection is traversed as follows.

Cazenove discloses a process for the continuous production of trinitrotoluene by dinitrating and trinitrating mononitrotoluene in the presence of concentrated nitric acid and concentrated sulphuric acid or fuming sulfuric acid. The trinitration step is carried out in a group of pieces of equipment in which the reagents flow in co-current. This group comprises at least two stages, each stage having at least two nitration reactors in series followed by a separator. The first of the reactors in each stage being supplied separately with a mixture of concentrated sulphuric acid or fuming sulphuric acid and nitric acid.

Coon discloses that nitronium trifluoromethanesulfonate may be used as a nitrating reagent in sulfuric acid or in organic solvents and for mono- or dinitration of toluene. The applicants, however, respectfully suggest that the Examiner's contention that "Coon teaches that trifluoromethanesulfonate acid or sulfuric acid can be used interchangeably in the nitration of aromatic compounds" is overly broad. The applicants contend, on the other hand, that while trifluoromethanesulfonate acid may be used as a nitrating reagent for aromatic compounds in certain situation, nothing in Coon would teach or suggest, either alone or in conjunction with Cazenove, that it could be substituted

for sulfuric acid in all situations. More specifically nothing in Coon would teach or suggest that trifluoromethanesulfonate could operably be used as a nitrating reagent in the claims of this application. For example, nothing in Coon and Cazenove would lead one of ordinary skill in the art to predict that two (rather than perhaps just one)  $\text{NO}_2$  radicals would be added to the DNT in step (b) of claim 1 or in claim 11. Nothing in Coon would also teach or suggest that trifluoromethanesulfonate acid and sulfuric acid are equivalents as a nitrating reagent.

The applicants also point out that language has also been added to claims 1 and 11 to the effect that only about one trifluoromethanesulfonate acid molar equivalent need be used and that process is carved out without use of sulfuric acid. These beneficial results would not be predictable from the cited references.

It is believed that the application is now in condition for allowance. If the examiner believes that any matters are still at issue, he is requested to contact applicant's undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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